

June 25, 2007

Contact: Robin Winchell (202) 225-4031

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - Congressman Charlie Melancon announced today that the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement will receive \$5,277,630 in grants from the Department of Justice for crime prevention and drug control programs throughout Louisiana and to address related prosecution problems. The funds will also target the problem of repeat offenders by strengthening crime prevention and drug abuse intervention, treatment, and rehabilitation efforts. In addition, the grants will be used for specialized law enforcement and prosecution training; for improvement of law enforcement, prosecution, and judicial systems; and for enhanced forensics laboratories, community policing, drug courts, anti-terrorist programs, K-9 units, and other needs.

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**"Protecting our families and communities from crime should not be left to state and local government alone," said Rep. Melancon. "It is imperative that the federal government assist local law enforcement authorities with ensuring the safety of our communities, and I am pleased the Department of Justice is aiding Louisiana in this vital effort with this award of over \$5 million in federal grant money."**

The grants are part of the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement

Assistance Program administered by the Justice Assistance Grant Program (JAG), which aims to help local law enforcement reduce violent crime, combat drug activity, and provide training for law enforcement. In Congress, Rep. Melancon has supported funding for Byrne grants and other measures to assist local law enforcement in south Louisiana.

Working with other members of the Louisiana delegation, Congressman Melancon successfully added \$50 million to the 2007 Emergency Supplemental for Edward Byrne Discretionary Grants to assist Louisiana and other Gulf Coast states in fighting the increase in violent crime resulting from Hurricanes Katrina. The Supplemental was signed into law by the President in May.

Congressman Melancon has also been a strong supporter of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, urging that the COPS program be fully funded and resisting proposed cuts to funding in the program. The COPS program has helped local communities hire law enforcement for the prevention of gang violence, drug crimes, and to help improve communication interoperability for local first responders.

Additionally, as a member of the House Rural Caucus Congressman Melancon has highlighted the growing methamphetamine epidemic in rural communities and focused on ways to increase law enforcement, develop strategies for environmental cleanup of meth labs, and provide social services for families who have been devastated by meth abuse. To that end, the Rural Caucus has urged the Bush Administration to focus on rural law enforcement in the National Drug Control Strategy.

Earlier this year, Congressman Melancon co-sponsored the Methamphetamine Remediation Research Act of 2007 (H.R. 365), which overwhelmingly passed the House in February with bipartisan support. This bill will help communities across Louisiana clean up methamphetamine labs and the toxic mess they leave behind. Specifically, the bill charges the Environmental Protection Agency with the development of health-based guidelines to assist state and local authorities in cleaning up former meth lab sites. The dangers of meth continue long after the labs have been shut down because of toxins that can continue to be a hazard for families that live in areas that were once used to produce the drug. In addition to co-sponsoring the legislation, Congressman Melancon also supported it as a member of the Science and Technology Committee, where the bill was first considered.

Congressman Melancon has also been a strong supporter of the Crime Victims Fund which

enables local communities to assist victims of domestic abuse, child physical and sexual abuse, drunk driving, sexual assault, elder abuse, robbery, assault, and homicide. This fund also provides for crisis intervention programs and counseling, support groups, shelters, emergency financial assistance for victims of crime.

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